Operational and workplace guidance in response to novel coronavirus

The information below provides counties with guidelines on preparing for and responding to issues and questions related to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19). These guidelines may be adjusted as the state and MAC continues to learn more about the spread and impacts of COVID-19. MAC encourages you to develop your own guidelines and policies in cooperation with state and local health officials and only offers this as a template for your consideration.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Federal and state guidance is changing rapidly so the links in the document should be used regularly.

Updated information from CDC is imbedded in the links below and the main source of federal policy information can be found at: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/index.html)

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services is maintaining an updated Coronavirus site at: [https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/](https://health.mo.gov/living/healthcondiseases/communicable/novel-coronavirus/)


In addition, Gov. Parson has also urged communities to adhere to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s recommendations to the cancellation or suspension of public gatherings of 50 individuals or more with the exception of education institutions, daycare facilities and business operations. The governor’s response to the CDC recommendations can be found here: [https://governor.mo.gov/press-releases/archive/governor-parsons-statement-regarding-cdc-recommendations-mass-gatherings-and](https://governor.mo.gov/press-releases/archive/governor-parsons-statement-regarding-cdc-recommendations-mass-gatherings-and)

**Steps to take regarding daily office operations**

Managers and supervisors must encourage employees to remain home when they are sick.

Take steps to maximize telework options for as many employees as possible. For employees who do not ordinarily telecommute, ask supervisors to identify tasks that employees can do remotely, or provide alternative options for telecommuting, if circumstances later necessitate an expansion of telework.
Ensure each of your worksites are taking steps to maintain high environmental hygiene standards by cleaning surfaces with EPA-approved environmental disinfectants. In particular, routinely clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops and doorknobs. If feasible, provide disposable disinfectant wipes so that commonly used services can be wiped down by employees before each use.

For agencies with regular public interface, post signs and resources to address non-pharmaceutical interventions and consider further efforts to mitigate exposure, especially for individuals showing symptoms. Click here to view resources.

**Conferences, Meetings and business-related gatherings**

Consider, where possible canceling or adjusting non-essential in-person employee meetings and gatherings of 10 or more individuals for the time being. Please work with staff to develop alternatives for conducting these meetings and use good judgment when determining which meetings are essential.

Agencies should assess the need for conferences and large gatherings of 50 or more, and whether alternative accommodations can be made to mitigate exposure. If it is determined a conference is essential and cannot be delayed or conducted by other means, refer to local health authority guidance on strategies to mitigate exposure.

Work with staff to develop alternatives for conducting these meetings to minimize risk, including the use of remote meeting technology.

**Direction related to travel**

All business travel to impacted areas on the CDC list Warning Levels 3 and 2 is cancelled- click here to see CDC travel detail.

Limit all non-essential business travel. Essential travel should be determined by the governing body.

When determining what is essential travel you should consider several factors, including: is the travel related to the Agency Continuity of Operations; what is the destination and is it currently impacted; what is the mode of travel and does it involve movement through impacted areas described in the CDC link above?; what is the mission, and does it take the person into a higher exposure situation (i.e. large conference); and are there alternative methods that can still accomplish the mission (Video Conference, remote access)?

**Guidance when considering office closure**

Decisions on office closure are to be made in consultation with the impacted elected official when possible. For offices housed with multiple agencies, impacted directors are to coordinate with each other prior to closure. Essential functions of the office must be maintained as part of your Continuity of Operations Plan.

When determining whether to close an office please consider several factors, including: impact to the mission and public; risk to employees and public of remaining open; alternatives to continue
effective operations (remote location, telecommuting); span of impacted area or potential for further contamination; impact of closure on employees and public; and ability to conduct a partial closure of office.

How should our organization navigate questions on possible exposure

The steps an organization should take when an employee reports a possible exposure to COVID-19 will depend upon the specific circumstances yet employers are asked to err on the side of caution. When preparing for navigating issues related to exposure, please follow the steps below:

First: get familiar with existing CDC risk assessment resources. These resources should be reviewed immediately. The first link provides details on the factors and customary CDC interventions an organization should take- click here to review the document. The second link is decision matrix to help assess the appropriate employer interventions- click here to review the decision matrix. Information in these documents will assist with providing some detail on the factors and possible employer interventions.

Second: consult with your local health jurisdiction to assess next steps. Access to state resources and contact information can be found here.

Third: based on the advice of the local health jurisdiction, take appropriate action, if any. If the employee is directed to stay away from the workplace, take steps to determine if remote work is an option while the employee is away from the office and able to work. If the employee is unable to work remotely, explore leave options for the employee. Agencies should administer leave in accordance with the employee leave provisions of their applicable collective bargaining agreement or rules.

Note: If working with an employee confirmed to have COVID-19 infection, agencies should inform employees of their possible exposure in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or HIPAA.

Quarantine

Prior to taking any specific action regarding office closure, work restrictions, or quarantine, we urge you to consult with your health department staff/health officer/board of health and county attorney’s office.